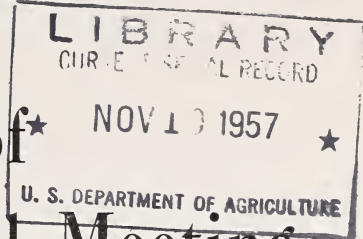


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Making the Most of Your Co-op Annual Meeting

By Oscar R. LeBeau
and French M. Hyre



FCS Circular 22

Farmer Cooperative Service

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE Farmer Cooperative Service conducts research studies and service activities of assistance to farmers in connection with cooperatives engaged in marketing farm products, purchasing farm supplies, and supplying business services. The work of the Service relates to problems of management, organization, policies, financing, merchandising, product quality, costs, efficiency and membership.

The Service publishes the results of the studies; confers and advises with officials of farmer cooperatives; and works with educational agencies, cooperatives, and others in the dissemination of information relating to cooperative principles and practices.

JOSEPH G. KNAPP,
Administrator,
Farmer Cooperative Service,
U. S. Department of Agriculture.

October 1957

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CONTENTS

	Page
Highlights.....	v
Each meeting an opportunity.....	1
Why hold an annual meeting?.....	2
Electing directors.....	3
Reports of officers.....	3
Questions and suggestions.....	4
Bylaw changes.....	5
Guides to effective planning.....	6
Planning in time.....	6
Getting members to help.....	6
Carrying out plans.....	6
Arranging time and place.....	7
Meeting time.....	7
Meeting place.....	7
Building up the program.....	9
Planning business procedure.....	10
Handling the nominations.....	11
Voting on nominations.....	11
Resolutions and amendments.....	12
Planning information features.....	12
Talks by association officials.....	13
Financial explanations.....	14
Discussion periods.....	15
Talks by outside speakers.....	18
Planning entertainment items.....	18
Annual luncheon or dinner.....	18
Musical selections.....	19
Talent shows.....	19
Quiz contests.....	19
Motion pictures.....	19
Women's activities.....	20
Youth activities.....	20
Professional entertainment.....	20
Mixing business and fun.....	20
Arranging for "props".....	21

	Page
Getting out the crowd.....	21
The official notice.....	23
Correspondence.....	23
Posters.....	23
Newspaper stories.....	23
Radio and television.....	24
Word-of-mouth publicity.....	24
Rolling out the welcome mat.....	24
Staging the big event.....	25
Job of the chairman.....	25
Keeping the program moving.....	26
Maintaining fairness and impartiality.....	27
Preserving order.....	27
Encouraging members to participate.....	27
Job of the secretary.....	27
Jobs of the various committeemen.....	28
After the meeting.....	29
Newspaper stories and publicity.....	29
Follow up report to members.....	29
Thank-you letters.....	29
Appraising the meeting.....	29
Appendix.....	30
Calendar of things to do.....	30
Examples of annual meeting notices.....	33
Example of detailed program for use of chairman.....	34

Highlights

ANNUAL meeting time is traditionally a red-letter day for farmer cooperatives. How to make the most of these annual gatherings is a matter that concerns many association managers, directors, and members.

The Farmer Cooperative Service is aware of this need. This circular is designed to bring together many ideas that have proved practical for others. Many of the suggestions can be adapted to meet varying situations.

Most of the activities discussed have been found basic to building and maintaining sound membership understanding as well as good community relations. Others have been included to provide variety and balance to the program.

Holding a successful annual meeting requires planning ahead, getting members to help and then carrying out the plans. The time and place have an important bearing on the attendance.

A well-balanced annual meeting program consists of three general

ingredients: Business, information and entertainment.

Conducting the business phase includes such legal matters as nominating and electing directors, receiving the official reports of the association and voting on bylaw changes and other association matters.

Planning the informational or educational phase revolves around such activities as illustrated talks; use of charts, slides, and movies; panel discussions; question and answer periods; and talks by special speakers. Keeping the members and management informed is a continuous two-way process that must never be neglected.

Adding variety and fun to the meeting may involve serving a meal or interspersing entertainment. The latter includes such items as musical selections, amateur acts, quiz contests, motion pictures and professional entertainment.

An important factor in getting out the crowd is to have something of interest for the entire family—men, women, and young folks.

Numerous devices can be used for announcing the annual meeting. Among these are official notices, correspondence reminders, posters, newspaper articles, radio and television announcements and word-of-mouth publicity. Moreover, any services designed to make the members feel welcome help to assure their coming again.

Once the details are carefully planned and delegated the actual staging of the meeting is much simpler. The chairman is a key figure and should know his job well. Much depends also on the support he receives from the other members of the planning team.

The chairman should keep the meeting moving, preside with fairness and impartiality, maintain parliamentary order and encourage questions and comments from the member patrons. A step-by-step annotated program is helpful for the chairman's guidance.

Planning for next year's meeting should begin as soon as this year's is over. Postmeeting activities should include the preparation of newspaper stories, a followup message to the members, thank-you letters to those who helped and a frank appraisal of the meeting as a guide to the future.

Making the Most of Your Co-op Annual Meeting

By

Oscar R. LeBeau
Membership Relations Branch
Management Services Division

French M. Hyre
Farm Services Branch
Purchasing Division

THE annual meeting is the high-water mark of the farmer cooperative year! It is the time when management gives an accounting to the members, and when the members—as joint owners—express their views to directors and employees.

The bylaws require an annual meeting. Every loyal member anticipates a good one. But successful meetings don't just "happen"! Each detail must be planned and executed carefully. When this is

done, the annual meeting program can be important in stimulating good will and in building membership understanding.

This circular is designed to offer helpful suggestions to cooperative managers and others charged with this job. It is directed primarily to the associations that operate locally and invite the entire membership to the annual meeting. Many suggestions will be useful also to regional organizations whose annual meetings are attended by delegates.

Each Meeting an Opportunity

MARKETING, farm supply, and service cooperatives hold many thousands of annual meetings

each year. Each meeting offers an excellent opportunity to build good will and to stimulate interest in the

NOTE.—This circular is a revision of FCA Miscellaneous Report 92, "Making the Most of Your Annual Meeting," by French M. Hyre. The present authors gratefully acknowledge the helpful suggestions received from John H. Heckman,

Kelsey B. Gardner, Martin A. Abrahamson and other associates in Farmer Cooperative Service. They are likewise indebted to the various cooperative leaders who contributed photographs and ideas for the circular.

cooperative way of doing business, opportunities for the officers to sit down with the member-patrons and discuss the association's purposes, services, and accomplishments.

The annual meeting of a farmer cooperative can be anything from a routine formality or a cut-and-dried assemblage to a live and memorable event.

It may require, on the one hand, a frantic last-minute scurry to round up a quorum. It may involve, at the other extreme, a search for enough chairs to accommodate

the crowd. The kind of a meeting that develops is almost entirely in the hands of the board of directors, the manager and other key employees.

If the annual meeting is held simply to comply with the bylaws, there is little chance of its being anything but drab and monotonous. If it is held in the proper cooperative spirit as a yearly occasion when the members and the officials of their association get together to discuss operations and future plans, results can be rewarding.

Why Hold an Annual Meeting?

THE official purpose of the annual meeting is to review the program and the business of the cooperative for the past year, to elect officers and to plan future activities. It is a legal requirement.

The order of business is generally outlined in the association's bylaws. It includes reading the minutes, annual reports of officers and com-

mittees, electing directors, unfinished business and new business.

Each program should provide liberally for participation of the members, their wives and young people. This basic principle should govern all annual meeting planning.

The annual meeting affords the members a chance to ask questions and offer suggestions. It provides the management the opportunities to explain and discuss operating policies and to sound out the reaction of the members.

Management has this opportunity to instill more firmly in the mind of each member the thought, "This is my association. I share in its ownership and control. It is being operated for my benefit. I have a direct responsibility for its success."

Members exercise control of the cooperative at the annual meeting by: (1) Electing their directors, (2) receiving and passing upon the reports of their officers, (3) contributing comments and suggestions on the conduct of the business, and (4) by voting on bylaw changes, resolutions, and matters of policy.



Out in the audience, a member makes a point with the aid of a microphone.

Electing Directors

The election of capable directors is the first of the members' democratic privileges and responsibilities. Generally, the bylaws provide that the directors shall be elected by a vote of the members at the annual meeting. It is through the power to elect directors that the members exercise general control over the policies of the association. This is a vital part of the annual meeting and every possible precaution should be taken, therefore, to assure a fair and intelligent selection.

The election of directors is of prime importance because the corporate powers of an association are vested in them. They possess collectively all the powers that the association has under the law. They determine, either expressly or by implication, the acts to be performed and the plans and methods to be followed by the officers, agents and employees of the association.

Reports of Officers

The annual meeting provides an opportunity to bring the members up-to-date on the progress of their association. It is the logical time to review and analyze the past year's business; to discuss the trends in membership, volume and costs of operations; and to go into the financial status. The member's investment in his cooperative is as important a part of his farm business as his investment in a tractor, truck or any other piece of farm machinery.

Members are entitled to know all the pertinent facts concerning their organization. Properly presented and intelligently discussed, the annual reports are a basis of mutual

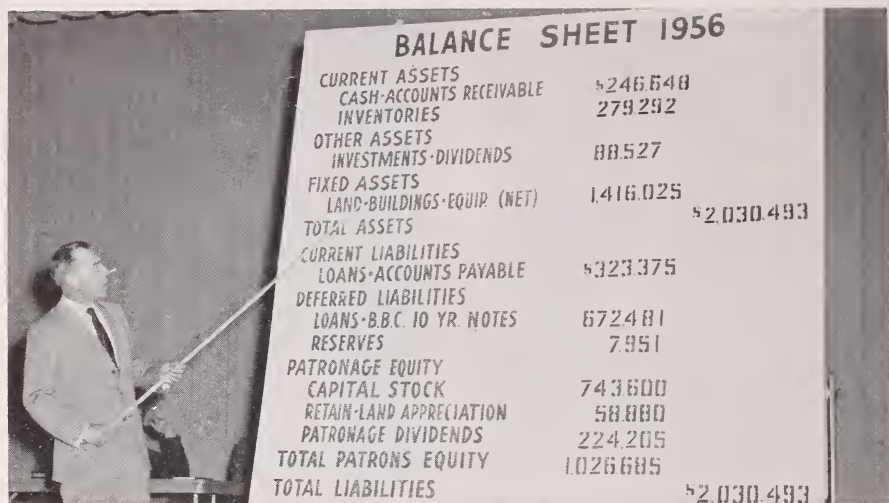


Members in the process of nominating a director "show hands" and are counted.

understanding between the management and the members. Through the use of well-chosen pictures, charts, slides and other visual aids, members can better grasp the highlights covered.

Annual reports can also serve a further purpose. "An analysis of the entire association setup is frequently refreshing," points out one manager, "even to those who have been in the organization for many, many years. Those who have lived with the organization and have done their part toward helping to build it to its present position come to assume that every member of the association is equally well informed regarding all these matters. But the story must be told over and over for the benefit of those who have not yet gotten the full grasp of the cooperative picture."

The above situation applies particularly to members attending for the first time. It applies also to many members' wives, and to the



A large chart tells the story of a year's assets and liabilities. Visual aids help carry messages in a concise form.

young people who are members of tomorrow. The highlights of the cooperative's business must be publicized repeatedly to the entire membership.

Questions and Suggestions

Contributing suggestions is an important phase of membership participation—particularly at the annual meeting. Members should not only be *permitted* to ask questions and offer suggestions, they should be *encouraged* to do so.

It may be desirable at times to submit certain questions to a direct vote of the members. A preparatory step, of course, is to supply them with adequate facts on which to base a decision. Whether or not a vote is taken, the members are entitled at all times to a voice in the matters under consideration.

It is not possible to anticipate all the questions that the members will ask. Some may want to know more about the organization's capital

structure or its operating policies. Others may want more details concerning operating costs. A number may have heard rumors critical of some aspect of the cooperative.

The annual meeting gives the member an opportunity to bring all such matters before the association for discussion and clarification. The "buzz" sessions discussed on page 15 of this circular are a distinct aid in this direction.

Cooperative information is not a one-way avenue—it is a give-and-take proposition. Much of the progress in cooperative organization and practices has come about as the result of practical suggestions made by members.

It should be anticipated, of course, that in general discussions there may be differences of opinion, and that occasionally heated arguments may result. These need not be harmful, and with careful handling by the chairman may be beneficial. Airing grievances and

bringing to light any smoldering dissatisfactions may avoid a more serious flareup at a later time. It is much better to have any problems and weaknesses of the association discussed in the meeting hall than to have them argued on the street corner.

Bylaw Changes

Voting on amendments to bylaws or other organization papers is a membership matter which arises occasionally. Changing economic conditions, or merely the growth and expansion of the business, may make it desirable for an association to change or amend its organization papers. This usually is considered and voted on by members at the annual meeting.

Not to keep the bylaws abreast of current practices and needs can lead to serious difficulties. Directors should anticipate the changes

needed and recommend well considered amendments.

The proposed amendments should be publicized in advance of the meeting with supporting arguments. This is much better than to have some hurriedly conceived action spring from the floor.

Legally, an association cannot engage in any activity, handle any commodity or perform any service unless authorized to do so by its charter. Through its bylaws, an association regulates its voting procedure; sets the time and place of its annual meeting and regulates the transfer of its stock from one person to another.

Through its bylaws, an association may provide also for the use of a contract or marketing agreement; outline the manner in which its members' products are to be handled and specify the procedure for settling with its grower-members.



This may look like an "Information Please" setup, and in many respects that's what it is. A panel representing management answers questions put to it by members.

Guides to Effective Planning

THE successive steps to an effective annual meeting are so simple that they are often overlooked. They involve: (1) Planning in time, (2) getting the members to help, (3) carrying out the plans, and (4) arranging time and place.

Planning in Time

Advance planning is the main spring which sets the wheels moving. Without such planning there is usually waste motion.

Almost as important as the planning itself, moreover, is the time when the planning is started. This must be far in advance of the meeting—weeks, even months before.

Detailed plans cannot be developed overnight. Qualified speakers can seldom be found at the last minute. Whether or not to serve a free lunch must be decided. Arrangements for a suitable hall with plenty of chairs, a blackboard, charts and other essentials cannot await the day of the meeting.

The responsibility for this planning rests upon the shoulders of the manager and the board of directors. Their planning must cover arranging the time and place, building up the program, getting out the crowd and staging the meeting itself.

Stated in another way the four essentials of a good meeting are adequate and proper facilities, a stimulating and well-balanced program, a large representative attendance and membership participation. A meeting which falls down in any one of these respects cannot be entirely successful.

Each of the four general phases of the planning—as well as the four essentials of a good meeting—is

interdependent on the others. Although they are discussed separately in the following pages, the management and directors should tackle them together, and continuously, on a four-flank approach.

Getting Members To Help

Like other responsibilities of the management and directors, planning the annual meeting is a job that may be delegated in part to the members themselves. The more men, women, and young folks who feel a personal responsibility in making the meeting a success, the more successful the meeting is likely to be.

Thus to help plan and carry out the meeting the president may appoint a number of special committees to work with the association's officers and directors. Among these should be program, attendance, lunch and entertainment committees. Your cooperative will doubtless think of others.

In some of the larger associations covering wide territories, local annual meeting committees have been appointed in each district to contribute suggestions and contact the members.

Carrying Out Plans

The slogan "Plan Your Work and Work Your Plan" is appropriate here. This requires listing step by step the many jobs that need doing, assigning the various tasks to specific individuals or committees for fulfillment and finally following through to see that all the plans are translated into action.

Since timing is so important, it helps to develop a calendar of things to be done. The appendix of this



Preparations were long in process before this registration was possible. Behind the scenes planning is a vital preliminary to a successful annual meeting.

circular contains a suggested outline, week by week. (See page 30.)

Arranging Time and Place

Time and place are the first two things to be decided in planning the annual meeting. Both have considerable bearing upon the number of persons who can or will attend. Often the association's bylaws name the general time and the place, but with enough latitude to permit some choice, at least as to the actual meeting hall.

Meeting Time

The day and hour should be one which best suits the convenience of the members. Few people can attend meetings when they are busy with important jobs on their farms.

More will be likely to attend if the meeting is held some time during the slack season, after the rush

of the harvest season and before the work on the next season's crop has begun. Generally this coincides with the fiscal year and permits the meeting to be held soon after the close of the year's operations.

There should be allowed, however, sufficient time after the close of the fiscal year for an audit to be made, and for the manager and officers to prepare adequate and intelligent reports covering the year's operation.

The time of day and the day of the week also may be factors affecting attendance. If it is found that the time is inconvenient and is tending to cut down attendance, the bylaws should be amended to permit a more suitable time.

Meeting Place

The meeting hall should be favorably located; have adequate seating

capacity; and be comfortable from the standpoints of heat, light, ventilation, and other arrangements.

Convenience of location is not the only consideration in selecting the hall. Surrounding conditions and attributes of the room itself should be considered.

Outside voices and disturbances divert attention and detract from the success of the gathering. An important detail in selecting the hall is to avoid nearby ball games, traffic noises, building construction, band rehearsals, tap dancing classes and other annoying distractions. Nearby parking and accessibility by public transportation are factors.

Adequate seating capacity is perhaps the first point of importance in the hall. To invite people without providing them seats is as discourteous as it is uncomfortable. People standing, even around the edges of the room, are continually shifting and moving. This distracts the speakers and audience.

It should be possible to estimate fairly accurately the number who are likely to attend by considering attendance at previous meetings, by talking to members from each community and by other advance "checking." It is better to have a meeting hall that is too large than one that is too small.



This is an example of a large meeting place. An adequate stage accommodates a large number who can be seen easily by an audience seated comfortably.

If the hall is large, a public address system will be needed. The system should be tested before the meeting and someone should be assigned to regulate it. Portable microphones can be scattered throughout the auditorium to facilitate member participation.

Before a hall is finally decided upon, someone should inspect it to make certain that the heating, lighting, and ventilation are suitable. It is essential that the meeting hall be one that can be darkened if the program includes motion pictures and slides.

The arrangement of the room is also important. A rear entrance permits members to enter or leave with a minimum of confusion. Light should enter the room from the sides or the back, rather than

from the front to be adequate.

A speaker's platform is suggested, particularly where the audience is large and the floor is not graduated. It helps if the rostrum is large enough to seat the board of directors, the speakers, and other program participants. A blackboard and a place to support charts are handy aids to speakers.

A convenient place to hang coats and hats should be provided. Sometimes, it works out best to have a separate checkroom for wraps.

Restroom facilities should be available and plainly marked.

The meeting hall should be decorated appropriately for the occasion. This may include the use of banners, flags, charts, and other items that help to give the meeting a "co-op" atmosphere.

Building Up the Program

A WELL-BALANCED program for the annual meeting consists of three general ingredients: Business, information, and entertainment.

The business portion includes such matters as the election of directors and bylaw amendments.

The information phase is made up of reports by association officials, discussion periods and talks by "outside" speakers.

The entertainment may be musical, a talent show or some contest in which many participate. It may include a lunch or dinner.

The individuals or the committees responsible for the job of building up the program must first decide what is to be included under each of the three classifications. They must next decide on the order or sequence of events. In consider-

ing the above, they must keep in mind the all-important matter of timing.

The time should be apportioned so that neither the business, the information nor the entertainment parts of the program overbalance one another. The meeting should neither drag nor run beyond a reasonable period.

A definite closing time is as important as a definite starting time. The members appreciate knowing in advance that they will be able to get home for the evening chores if it is a daytime meeting, or at a reasonable hour if it is a night session.

Hence, the time allotted to each subject on the program and its particular position on the program, should be carefully planned. Each lecturer—guest speaker included—



Cooperative spirit is really in evidence when a banker, a director, a farmer and an employee team to make an amateur quartet as part of the entertainment at an annual meeting.

should be given a definite limit on the length of his talk.

Adequate time should be allowed for discussion of reports and other matters. If there are to be gaps in the program—as, for example, when ballots are being counted—they should be filled by incidental details such as introducing guests, reading announcements, entertainment, or presenting the less-important reports.

Staging a successful annual meeting, like any other event in which a large number of people participate, requires a certain amount of showmanship. Showmanship is nothing more than holding the interest of a group or a crowd. Some of the fundamental factors to be kept in mind can be summarized in three simple don'ts.

Don't deaden the meeting by confining it exclusively to business and information.

Don't let it drag by including too-

lengthy speeches or too-tedious reports, or by leaving empty gaps when nothing is happening.

Don't overcrowd the schedule and necessitate omitting something toward the end, cutting the time for members' questions or running over-time.

Planning Business Procedure

The business portion of the annual meeting includes all matters which the bylaws specify must be voted upon by the members. It covers the election of directors, any changes in the articles of incorporation, bylaws, or marketing agreements, and the acceptance of reports. Also, it includes balloting on any policy matters which the directors may place before the members for action.

The procedure for amending the association's papers is set forth in the bylaws and requires advance notice and other legal requirements.

The procedure for nominating directors is usually defined in the bylaws. If not, it should be determined by the directors when planning the meeting.

In general, there are two steps in the election of directors: (1) The nominations, and (2) the voting. As in other association affairs, however, a period of discussion may be introduced profitably to encourage the members to think in terms of "the best man for the job" rather than in terms of "which of my friends would I like to see elected."

Handling the Nominations

If the nominations are made by a nominating committee, the board should appoint the members far enough in advance of the meeting to give sufficient time for careful and wise selection of nominees with due consideration for geographic representation.

An advantage of a nominating committee is that the members have time to seek out men considered outstanding in their knowledge of the association; their interest in its affairs; and their experience, integrity, and tact. Also, the committee can ascertain in advance the candidate's willingness to serve.

One problem of a nominating committee is the possible charge that the election is being "railroaded." There is less basis for such a complaint if the nominating committee is broadly representative of the membership and if it presents at least two strong nominees for each vacancy. Members find little interest in an election that is cut and dried.

To avoid the feeling that elections are manipulated, additional nominations to those of the nominating

committee should be called for and sufficient time allowed to receive them.

In some local associations all nominations are made either by written ballot or orally from the floor. The danger in relying entirely on these methods is that the best ability in the organization may be inadvertently overlooked.

Voting on Nominations

Even the business of voting calls for planning. In most associations voting is done by written ballot. This frees each member from outside influence or from embarrassment.

Generally, it is best to have ballots printed in advance, showing the nominees' names and providing space for possible write-ins. Ballots may be accompanied by short statements about each candidate. A good idea is to publish the names, pictures, and qualifications of the candidates in the membership publication preceding the annual meeting. Just before the balloting, each candidate should be introduced.



A tellers committee counts ballots that members have marked to elect directors.



Members study the all-important printed annual report being passed out here as part of the annual meeting activities.

A tellers' committee can distribute and count the ballots. It should see that the voting is conducted in accordance with the bylaws. Also the secretary of the association should preserve the ballots for a reasonable period.

As stated earlier, other program items can be used to fill in while the ballots are counted. This helps to assure a smooth and interesting meeting.

As soon as the counting is completed, the chairman announces the results. This may be followed near the end of the meeting by a short installation service and brief remarks from each of the new directors. The retiring directors and the losing nominees deserve an expression of appreciation.

Resolutions and Amendments

Voting on resolutions and bylaw changes merits a definite place on the agenda.

Usually, any proposed amendments will be initiated by the board of directors. Prior publication of the exact wording, together with the reasons for the proposed changes is

desirable, and often required. This prepares the members to vote with intelligence and dispatch.

If the voting is handled in an orderly and parliamentary manner, the time allotted to proposed resolutions need not be long. Appointment of a resolutions committee paves the way for careful consideration and wording of all resolutions. The committee can help to screen trivial or ill-advised items.

Planning Information Features

The informational portion of the annual meeting should be the meat of the program as far as the members are concerned. The reports and exhibits should bring them up-to-date on the affairs of their association and the conditions under which it operates. Moreover the discussions which properly follow should give them the opportunity to offer suggestions, comments, and questions.

Although annual reports are matters of business information, they should also be informational in an interpretative sense. A treasurer's report, for example, might properly consist of a simple operating statement and balance sheet. However, to present a clear and accurate picture of what the figures mean, some graphic illustration or interpretation is needed.

The president's or the manager's report, by the same token, might be a simple recitation of the past year's operations. It will be more worthwhile if it also includes a discussion of the organization's aims and objectives, its operating policies, changes, accomplishments, problems, and unmet needs.

If handled right, the annual meeting presents an ideal oppor-

tunity to develop cooperative understanding and a desire for further cooperative action. The starting point may well be a reiteration of the principles of cooperation and a cards-on-the-table approach to the facts as they apply to the cooperative.

The informational part of the meeting includes: (1) Talks by association officials (2) financial reports (3) discussion periods and (4) talks by "outside" speakers.

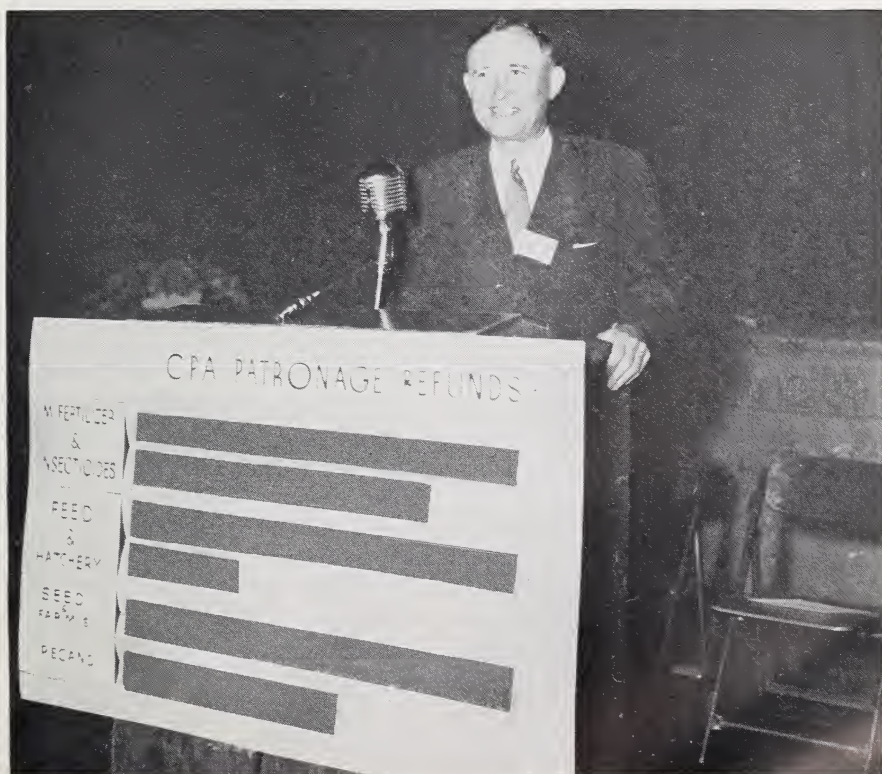
Talks by Association Officials

Two questions must be decided: Who is to speak? What subjects are to be covered? The number of

speakers is limited by the warning "Don't load the program with association officers to the exclusion of other features."

If more than one officer is to speak, they should get together to plan the ground each is to cover. There may be some points so important they deserve mention by each and every speaker. Many others will bore the listeners if repeated in detail. Furthermore, it is embarrassing to the second speaker to discover that a part of his subject has been appropriated by the first.

If the boundaries between the subject matter are clearly defined,



D. W. Brooks, general manager, Cotton Producers Association, Atlanta, presents a bar chart portraying the patronage refunds voted by the association.

two speakers talking 20 minutes each will probably hold the attention of the listeners better than one speaker talking for 40 minutes. An unusually effective speaker may warrant an exception.

Financial Explanations

The financial statements may be presented by the manager, treasurer, or other officer, depending on who is best equipped for the job. Some associations also arrange to have the auditor present.

Regardless of who has the assignment, the report should be prepared and presented carefully. Ordinarily, a statement of income and expense, and an up-to-date balance sheet are included. Operating costs should be fully explained and compared with those of the previous year. Assets, liabilities, and net worth items should be similarly discussed and compared. Any significant changes should be pointed out and explained.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the financial report depends as much upon the manner in which it is presented as upon its contents. Too often a good report loses its significance because the members are unable to follow the speaker and grasp the meaning of what he says.

There are two reasons why this is so. First, the average person is not familiar with the form of such reports nor with many of the terms commonly used in accounting. Terms such as "accrued assets," "fixed liabilities," and "reserves for contingencies" often leave him cold. They need to be explained in simple language.

Second, many reports are read too rapidly and contain too much poorly organized material. More

graphic illustrations and fewer words can remedy this situation.

Assets sometimes need to be presented in terms of "what the association owns" and liabilities in terms of "what the association owes." Ordinarily, it isn't enough to point to a figure and call it "depreciation." The speaker needs to go further and discuss the rate at which the cost of certain assets are being written off and to explain why this is considered to be a good business practice.

Because of the very nature of the financial report, the speaker must deal in terms of statistics. He must necessarily quote figures. However, to stand before a group of people and read, one by one, the items on an operating statement or balance sheet is not an effective way of presenting this type of information. It goes in one ear and out the other.

It will help considerably if members can have before them a copy of the operating statement or balance sheet being discussed. A chart in the front of the room, large enough for all to see, may accomplish this. The data may be put on a slide and projected on a screen. Also, printed copies can be distributed to the members.

Individual items shown on the financial statement are most significant when compared with certain other items. For example, the amount of money spent for salaries and wages has little significance except when compared with the total volume of business transacted. The loss from bad debts does not mean a great deal unless one knows how much business was done on credit.

Repairs for machinery and equipment mean most when we know how much machinery was being



These people are enjoying a break for a meal—and along with it they prepare for a “buzz session” at the general session later.

used. The figure representing “total assets” is not of much significance when it stands alone. The important thing is, how much of these assets does the association actually own and how much represents borrowed capital?

Discussion Periods

Alloting reasonable time for discussion is an important principle of good annual meeting planning.

Discussion may be encouraged in numerous ways. A first step is to reserve definite periods on the program for discussion. Another is to develop the atmosphere: “This is your meeting; we value your suggestions and questions.”

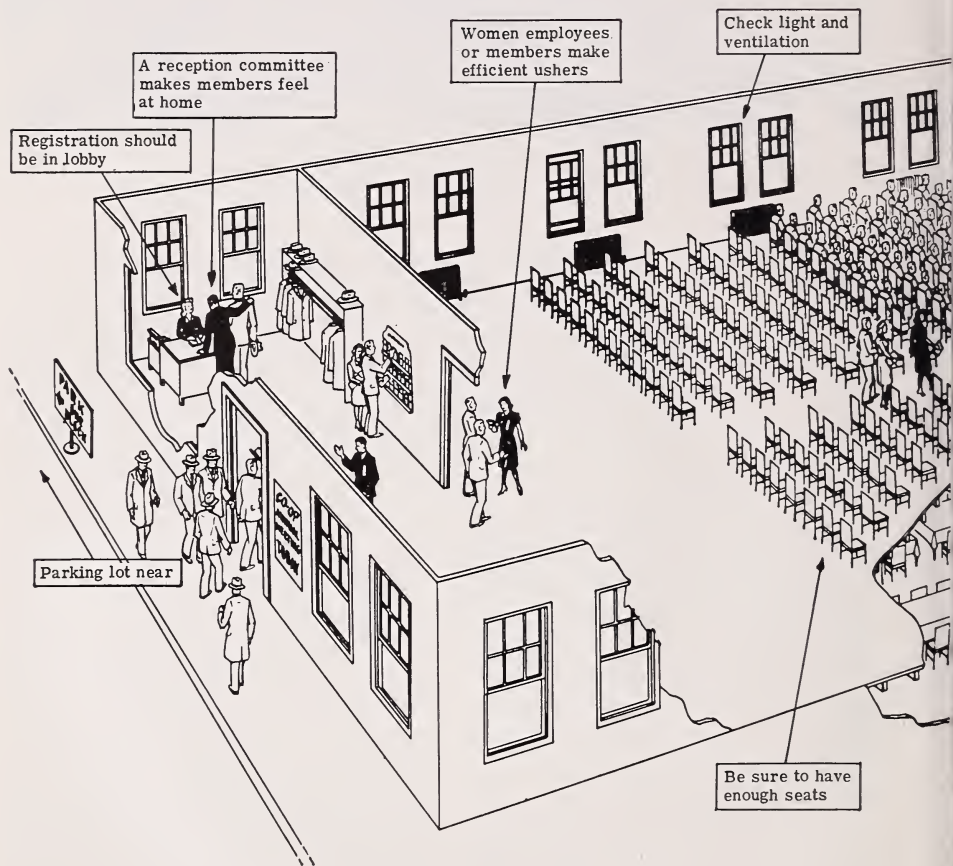
A number of leading cooperatives are using the “buzz session” technique with excellent results. This is how they do it. When the members stream into the dining room for their mid-day luncheon or evening meal they find each table accommodates six. While seated for the meal

each group selects a spokesman and agrees on some topic or question they would like to hear discussed by a panel of the management staff. At the subsequent session with officials and board members on the stage a moderator refers each question to the appropriate person for explanation or discussion.

These “buzz sessions” give members a chance to get things off their chests. Moreover, the fact that six people must have agreed on a question before it is submitted helps eliminate trivial items and improve the quality of those asked. Referring each question to the departmental head directly responsible for that phase of the cooperative’s operation means it will get the best attention possible. It also gives members a chance to become better acquainted with the key employees of their cooperative.

A variation of the above is to arrange for a panel of selected individuals to discuss some timely topic.

Figure 1.—The meeting place, as well as t



program, needs to be carefully planned.

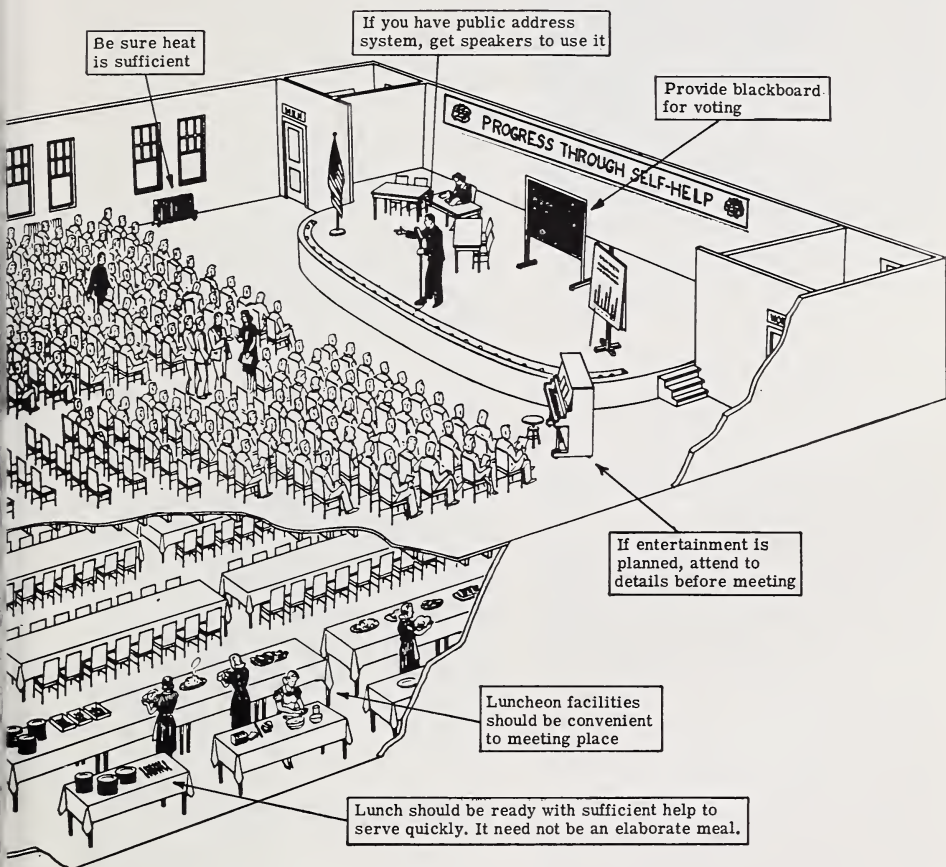
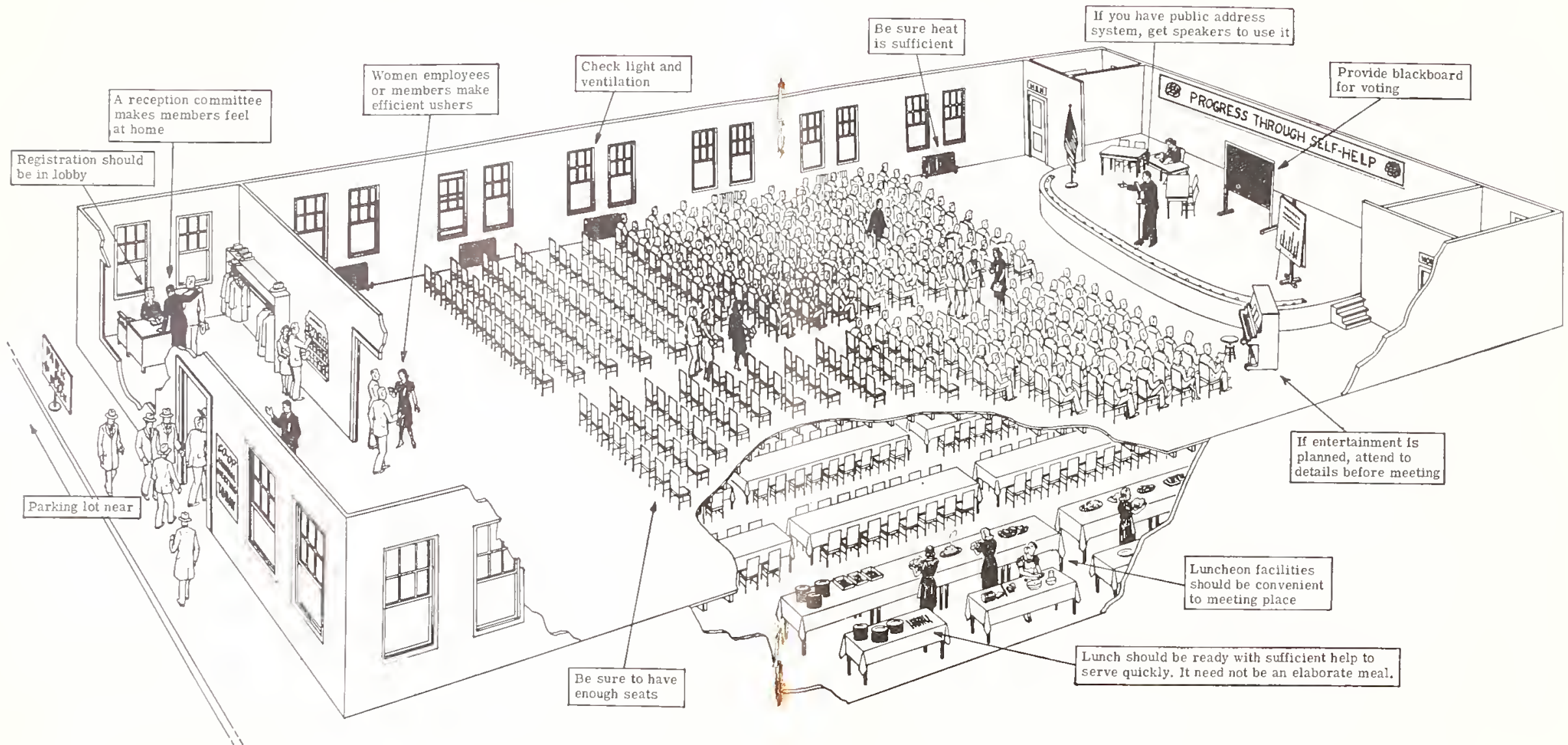




Figure 1.—The meeting place, as well as the program, needs to be carefully planned.



This is a good way to bring key cooperative leaders before the meeting. Under the guidance of a good chairman, such a panel discussion can be highly informative. After an introductory period in which the members of the panel present their ideas and exchange points of view, the topic can be opened for discussion from the floor. In this manner, participation by members is further encouraged.

Talks by Outside Speakers

Guest speakers are frequently invited to address annual meetings. Such talks may fall under the category of "entertainment" as well as "information."

If the guest speaker is a well-known person, or holds an important position, his presence may add prestige to the association in the eyes of the members. His appearance on the program may also help to get out the crowd.

Guest speakers, therefore, may be invited for their own sake, for the message they have or for both reasons. They need not be prominent if they have a valuable contribution to make.

A prime consideration in deciding whom to invite is the prospective speaker's understanding of agriculture and rural life. Also, the encouragement and enthusiasm he can bring to the association. The speaker should be sympathetic to the association's objectives and bring an inspirational message.

Whatever the reason for inviting the guest, the terms of his coming should be clearly stated. He may be assigned a subject or given some latitude, as the planning group thinks best. He should be given a time limit. If he is not familiar

with the group he is to address, background information helps.

Valuable as a guest speaker may be, he should not be regarded as a substitute or coverup for the other items that are a rightful part of every annual meeting program. The main feature should always be the active participation of the members in the business of their association.

Planning Entertainment Items

Everyone likes to eat and have fun. Cooperative members are no exception. Good entertainment is an important ingredient for a successful annual meeting. Like seasoning on food, it makes the whole affair more attractive. It helps bring out some members and their families who might not attend. It puts the audience in a more receptive mood.

Business details and informational talks require mental concentration. Most people cannot concentrate over long periods, their attention wanders. Therefore, it is wise to break the monotony at intervals by entertainment.

Entertainment need not be costly, elaborate or professional, but it ought to be "good."

Annual Luncheon or Dinner

The best entertainment of all, in the opinion of many people, is a meal—whether it be a mid-day lunch, an evening dinner, or refreshments at the end of the meeting. A meal, of course, involves some specialized planning and is best delegated to an individual or committee with no other responsibility.

Unless the meal is extremely simple, it involves knowing in advance the approximate number that

will attend. Members must be contacted before the meeting by mail, telephone, or in person. This calls either for reservations or for issuing tickets. This is a job that requires a good deal of work, but it insures smooth functioning later.

Musical Selections

Local soloists, duets, quartets, bands or orchestras fit well for brief interludes on any program. They can be worked in at almost any time. Good orchestral or organ music helps set the stage for the meeting. Similarly, group singing and "exercise" songs help liven up the crowd. A good song leader can contribute immensely to the success of the program.

Talent Shows

Amateur acts by young and old are popular with the public. Cooperatives can capitalize on this interest in much the same way as television is doing.

Talent show programs have special appeal to family audiences. Many associations prefer to use local talent to professional entertainers. Important sources of such local talent are the community high school, little theater groups, church choirs, barbership quartets, and civic orchestra groups.

Quiz Contests

Another type of entertainment well suited to a cooperative meeting is one in which the members entertain each other. This includes spelling bees, question boxes and "Professor Quiz" or "Information Please" contests. Such a contest can be educational as well as entertaining if the questions selected relate to the association and its operations.



A sister and brother who won first place in a local talent show do an encore for the annual meeting.

Here again, planning in advance is very essential. The master of ceremonies must not only have his contest material ready, but he should have a few victims or bell-wethers in the crowd who are primed to pick up the cues and help put the meeting across. Games in which everyone participates should usually be used only to climax and wind up the meeting.

Motion Pictures

Motion pictures can be used with success on many occasions. Usually they are best placed toward the end of the meeting. For maximum effectiveness each film should be introduced with a brief explanation of its purpose, and followed with a short discussion.

Important sources of educational films are Farmer Cooperative Service and Motion Picture Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, the American Institute of Cooperation, the 12 district offices of the Farm Credit Administration, the State Extension Services,

the State Departments of Education, the State Councils for Farmer Cooperatives, as well as a number of the larger cooperatives.

Women's Activities

As an attraction to members' wives, a number of cooperatives arrange educational tours, luncheons, teas, art exhibits, fashion shows and other events of special interest to women. Such events call for special planning. They should be timed so as to conflict as little as possible with the main meeting.

A number of cooperatives provide nursery and child care facilities for small children so mothers can attend. A more detailed discussion of annual meeting activities of interest to women is contained in FCS Circular 15, "How Women Help Their Farmer Co-ops." Among the activities described is the election of farm home advisory committees around which the women's interests can be centered.



Some women help on local farm home advisory committees. Here a woman chooses her representative.

Youth Activities

An increasing number of cooperatives include special features on their annual meeting programs to interest young people, the future cooperatives leaders. Often these cover one or more of the entertainment features mentioned. In other instances, youth delegates who attend the State Cooperative Council meeting or the annual summer conference of the American Institute of Cooperation may relate their experiences.

For numerous other ways in which annual meetings can hold the interest of young people see FCS Circular 1, "Cooperative Business Training for Farm Youth."

Professional Entertainment

A wide variety of professional entertainment is available for those willing to pay for it. This includes comedians, magicians, acrobats and dozens of others. Generally, the greater the audience's participation the better. Where feasible, the entertainment committee should make it a point to see or review the entertainer's program beforehand. This precaution will save embarrassment from acts that are unsuited for family audiences.

Mixing Business and Fun

In the category of combined entertainment and business is the practice adopted by some cooperatives of making the annual meeting the occasion for distributing patronage dividend checks or equities in the revolving capital. A number of cooperatives have carried this step further and provide on-the-spot facilities for cashing the checks—a feature sure to attract members' wives. When the refund is paid



A youth group that won in a cooperative contest is invited to attend the annual meeting. They are the leaders of tomorrow.

in silver dollars or in \$2 bills, it helps remind local merchants of the favorable impact which the local cooperative has on the community.

By dramatizing what would otherwise be a routine business procedure, a certain entertainment value is gained. Also, it provides effective evidence of members' benefits.

Arranging for "Props"

Just as a stage play requires scenery and "properties" for use by the actors, an annual meeting requires certain paraphernalia to dress it up and to facilitate its

progress. Assembling these odds and ends is a job in itself and may well be entrusted to a "property man." He should be in on the planning from the start so that he can list and secure the necessary items.

These may include everything from pencils and paper for voting, to charts, diagrams and projectors to illustrate talks. "Props" include programs, tickets, name tags and any other printed or typewritten material. They include a gavel, ash trays, water, and other items. Some of these may be obtained on short notice, while others may take days or weeks to prepare.

Getting Out the Crowd

GETTING members to attend the annual meeting may or may not be something of a problem. If previous meetings have been

spirited, entertaining and worthwhile, the members usually respond with little urging. If not, more effort will be required.

In either case, planners must decide what it will take to draw a good crowd. It may be a meal, a good discussion, an important speaker, a quiz contest or some special entertainment feature. It may be a combination of these.

Some associations develop a theme—an important or interesting question such as “Should the association build additional facilities?” or “Should membership be limited?”

Often attendance can be stepped up by making it a family affair, with something of special appeal to the women and children. This is usually the practice of the cooperatives that have had outstanding attendance.

Some associations have followed the plan of holding a general in-

formational session in the morning, then providing separate activities for the women and children in the afternoon while the men pursue other items of interest. Occasionally, associations will secure the cooperation of local merchants in putting on special sales for the day of the meeting. The latter arrangement has doubtful value if it detracts too much from faithful attendance at the meeting itself.

A number of associations follow the practice of giving door prizes. The individuals receive numbered tickets as they arrive for a drawing at the very close of the session. Some give away “lucky number” prizes at various points throughout the meeting. This helps to encourage constant attendance.

When the decision has been made



Local businessmen cooperated in making this display of the cars, machinery and farm supplies that patronage refunds could buy.

on the program and its "drawing cards," the next step toward securing a large attendance is advance publicity. Premeeting publicity may include the formal notice of the meeting, letters, circulars, stickers or rubber-stamped notices in all outgoing correspondence, posters, newspaper stories, radio and television announcements, and word-of-mouth advertising.

The Official Notice

The bylaws of many associations provide that the notice of the annual meeting shall be mailed to each member at his last-known address 10 to 15 days in advance of the meeting. A bare statement as to the time and place, however, does very little to stimulate interest. At no additional cost, except the expenditure of some thought, the official notice can be dressed up into a sales letter that will do a lot toward creating a desire to come. (See Appendix, page 33.)

Correspondence

Each letter written to a member during the period immediately preceding the annual meeting can be used effectively as a reminder. Some associations do this by incorporating one or two appropriate sentences in the body of the letter itself; others do it by adding a "P. S." at the bottom. In either case, only a short statement is needed. For example: "It looks as though we will have a good attendance at the annual meeting this year. I hope you are planning to come. Don't forget the date—January 16, Community Hall at Simpson, 9:30 a. m."

Small folders describing the meeting may be used as stuffers in outgoing mail. A gummed label



This little fellow draws for the lucky winner of the door prize.

or rubber-stamped reminder of the time and place may also be used.

Posters

Much interest can be created by the use of posters playing up the attractive parts of the program. These can be displayed at the association's offices, store windows, on association trucks and other places. The art classes in high schools frequently are willing to cooperate in a poster contest with small awards and will make their entries available for display.

Newspaper Stories

A story in the local newspapers a few days before the date set for the meeting may help increase attendance. Most local editors are glad to get news of this kind, especially if it is well written and contains such items as date, place and time. Names of retiring directors, nominees, speakers and special items of interest help to build a good release.

Many associations have their meetings mentioned in the local papers as many as three times before the actual day. The first mention is a natural result of the directors setting the date and place of the meeting. The second can be centered around the announcement of the chief speaker. The third gives all the details a day or two before the meeting.

An advertisement in the local paper may be helpful from several standpoints, not the least of which is that it demonstrates the cooperative's support of other local enterprises.

Radio and Television

All that has been said about newspaper stories applies equally to radio and television publicity. Spot announcements over local stations are increasingly effective in reaching the general public. Timely interviews between the station director and the cooperative manager can build interest in forthcoming events.

This job takes some advance work. It involves the preparation of a suitable script as well as rehearsals before going on the air.

Word-of-Mouth Publicity

Probably the most effective form of publicity is word-of-mouth. Employees and directors may well make a point of talking up the meeting on every occasion and during every conversation with a member. Interest can be created and the individual member can be given a feeling of responsibility if he is simply asked for suggestions.

Word-of-mouth publicity can be organized to reach practically every member by the selection of a com-

mittee, or of one individual in each community, to visit or telephone the members. This procedure can be further stimulated by arranging a contest with small prizes for the group or locality which has the highest percentage of attendance.

Rolling Out the Welcome Mat

Most cooperatives will wish to invite various public officials, farm organization leaders and friends. This is an excellent public relations opportunity.

The invitation list may include a wide range of cooperative and educational leaders such as State agricultural marketing specialists, the executive secretary of the State cooperative council, the State extension director, the State agricultural teacher-trainer and other State and district leaders. It may also include the local mayor, superintendent of schools, county extension agents, local teachers of vocational agriculture, the local editor, the local banker, the local ministers, and service club leaders. Not to be overlooked are the managers and directors of neighboring cooperatives.

Good public relations require that written invitations be extended the guests by the general manager. Someone should be assigned to see that the guests are greeted when they arrive and that they are duly recognized during the course of the meeting.

The members on arrival should also be greeted by an individual or welcoming committee. This committee strives to make every member and his family feel at home. It shows them where to place wraps and to register. It also supplies programs and identification cards, and makes introductions to guests.



Greeting guests is an important part of getting a meeting off to a good start. At Raleigh, N. C., T. B. Upchurch, president, North Carolina Cotton Growers Cooperative Association; G. D. Arndt, assistant general manager, North Carolina Farmers Cooperative Exchange; and M. G. Mann, general manager, North Carolina Farmers Cooperative Exchange, greet Gov. Luther Hodges of North Carolina at their combined annual meeting. (Left to right)

Staging the Big Event

IF THE planning is done well, the actual staging of the annual meeting is relatively simple. The meeting, in fact, is largely "made" before it begins.

There remains, of course, the actual conducting or carrying out of the program. But with well-laid plans, even a mediocre chairman can do reasonably well, and a good chairman should assure success.

Although the chairman carries the chief responsibility for the final effectiveness of the planning that

has been done, he should have a corps of behind-the-scene aides, each knowing his job. The chairman may be compared to the captain of a team, calling the signals at the appropriate time.

Job of the Chairman

The presiding officer is not only the captain of a team, he is also the master of ceremonies and the time-keeper. From the moment he calls the gathering to order until the time he announces it adjourned,



The central figure here is the chairman. His broad responsibility extends from the people on stage to those in the audience.

everything is in his hands; everything is under his guiding control.

His own advance preparation should include complete familiarity with the program. He should try to have in mind remarks to make at various points in the proceedings. He will know the names and titles of those he intends to introduce, and have enough background information about them to be able to present them properly.

Some chairman like to prepare a special program for their own use and include in it more detail than is shown in the printed program given out to the members. The example shown in the Appendix, page 34, will illustrate some of the things that can be done in this regard.

It is the duty of the presiding officer (1) to keep the meeting moving, (2) to be fair and impartial, (3) to preserve order, and (4) to encourage members to participate.

Keeping the Program Moving

A prompt beginning and an on-time adjournment are earmarks of a well-ordered meeting. An announcement at the beginning that the session will adjourn at a certain definite hour helps to put everyone at ease. When the proceedings move smoothly the audience is much more likely to remain attentive. If, in addition, the chairman can manage to build up among his listeners a feeling of anticipation for some of the later features of the day, the entire program will be one in which there is not a dull moment.

To keep a meeting on schedule requires a watchful eye. It must be done, also, without the appearance of hurrying any who are given the floor. It must be done with full recognition of encouraging discussion and member participation.

Maintaining Fairness and Impartiality

A successful chairman must indicate by his attitude and conduct that he desires to be fair and impartial. He must lay aside all personal preferences or dislikes and, in any discussion, give to each side an equal opportunity to present its views.

On rare occasions, of course, the chairman may wish to relinquish the chair to the vice president and express his views from the floor. In such instances, parliamentary law dictates that he shall not return to the chair until that particular matter is settled. The chairman should bear in mind, however, that he may lose his appearance of impartiality should he take sides and participate in debate too frequently.

Preserving Order

It is the duty of the presiding officer to keep order and to see that the meeting is conducted in a business-like manner. He should not permit a member to have the floor without first addressing the Chair, nor permit the members to talk back and forth to each other. To bring a matter before the house officially, a motion must first be moved and seconded. Discussion may then follow.

The chairman should tactfully avoid a dragged-out debate on a motion by frivolous, trivial or immaterial discussion. Usually he can find a convenient time to break in and ask, "Are you ready for the question?"

The chairman should not permit motions to be made and seconded when they are unrelated to the business of the association. He has the right under parliamentary law to rule out of order such motions which obviously are made to ob-

struct transaction of the business before the meeting.

As a matter of fact, the chairman has the right to refuse to recognize or give the floor to any one bent on obstruction. If such rights are exercised tactfully and wisely, the chairman will find that he can keep the program moving on schedule and still not offend anyone.

Encouraging Members To Participate

As already stated, the most satisfactory meeting from the standpoint of the member is one in which he himself takes part. Not every member, of course, can be given a place on the program. However, members should be encouraged to ask questions and to express opinions before a vote on special problems of the association. Likewise, the members should exchange viewpoints on the association's operating policies and discuss plans for the future operation of the organization.

This type of participation in the program gives the management a better understanding of the various members' points of view.

If the members are hesitant about entering into the discussion, the chairman may wish to invite comment with questions as: "We have heard from several of the older members regarding this question, now what do some of you younger fellows think about it." Or, "I don't believe we have heard from anyone in Lewis County on this matter; what do you men think about it?"

Job of the Secretary

The secretary of the association should record the annual meeting happenings. These cover the highlights of the program and the de-



An essential ingredient of the annual meeting is member participation. Here it is shown in operation with a panel of co-op leaders answering members' questions.

tails of the business meetings—among other things, the election of directors, policy decisions and by-law changes. The secretary is in a sense a historian.

To catch all of these details, the secretary may need a stenographer to help him. Where circumstances warrant, mechanical recordings may be made of the proceedings so it is possible to transcribe portions later.

With a little insistence on the part of the chairman and the secretary, most major motions can be made in writing. This results in better considered motions and makes it easier for the secretary to record the proceedings accurately.

Normally, the order of business includes reading a concise set of minutes of the previous annual meeting.

Jobs of Various Committeemen

How well the meeting succeeds will depend in a large measure on

how well the various committeemen carry out their assigned tasks.

Many of these committees will need to operate in full swing on annual meeting day. Others will be well over the hump by the time the opening gavel sounds. All will get a measure of satisfaction in seeing their efforts contribute to the day's success.

Each key chairman should make sure that all is in readiness and his responsibilities completed. Each should make known his whereabouts and stand ready to respond to last-minute additional calls from the general chairman. The little things quietly done make the difference between a good meeting and a poor or mediocre one. Finally, when the meeting is over, each key chairman should see that all properties are returned and that all who helped are thanked for their services. Also, anything learned should be preserved or passed on for the guidance of similar committees in future years.

After the Meeting

EVEN after the annual meeting, some things can be done that will add to its effectiveness. These include: (1) Preparation of newspaper stories and publicity on what was said and done, (2) a followup message to the members, (3) sending thank-you letters, and (4) an appraisal of the meeting.

Newspaper Stories and Publicity

Newspaper stories on the annual meeting provide an opportunity for a cooperative to sell itself to the general public. For this reason a news article, to be most helpful to the association, should have a strong lead—the facts or figures reported at the meeting or some outstanding statement of one of the speakers. It should also include such information as the time and place of the meeting, who presided, the number of members attending, a brief résumé of the program, names of prominent persons and the new directors.

Followup Report to Members

A summary of what happened at the annual meeting is important both to the members who attended and to those who were absent. For those who attended, it helps to pull together the highlights of the meeting. For those who were absent, it is an essential step in keeping them informed of their cooperative. Since many associations do well to have 25 or 30 percent of their members attend an annual meeting, it is particularly important that there be a good followup message to all.

One of the best ways to disseminate the highlights of an annual meeting is through the cooperative's regular publication or newsletter.

Other ways this information can

be brought to the members are through local meetings, radio and television interviews, and mimeographed letters or news flashes.

Thank-you Letters

Immediately following the meeting some associations send a letter to each person who had a part in the program to thank him for his assistance in making the meeting a successful one. This builds good will for the association and shows these persons that their time and effort were appreciated.

Appraising the Meeting

Soon after the meeting is the best time to size up the program as a whole and to appraise its strong features and its weakness. This is a good time to lay the groundwork for next year's meeting. Officers and directors should get together as soon as possible to talk about the effectiveness of the meeting and possible changes for another year.



In the report on the annual meeting, current accomplishments can often be traced from a humble beginning. This couple reads an original covenant that started their co-op in 1934.

Appendix

Calendar of Things To Do

A Checklist to Aid in Annual Meeting Planning

 (Name of cooperative) (Meeting date)

Check when done Things To Do ----- (Date) (Five weeks before) Whose job? (Fill in name)

- _____ 1. Hold annual meeting conference. Include several women and older youth in planning group and special committees. _____
- _____ 2. Appoint committees for such major jobs as program, nominations, reception and resolutions. _____
- _____ 3. Settle on date and place of meeting. Check to avoid conflicts. Reserve meeting hall. _____
- _____ 4. Invite special speaker and get his acceptance. _____
- _____ 5. Plan entertainment and make sure it is available. Draw on local talent, if possible. _____
- _____ 6. Plan to serve food: Promptly, attractively, adequately. _____
- _____ 7. Plan conference with auditors on scope of annual audit. _____
- _____ 8. ----- _____

Things To Do ----- (Date) (Four weeks before)

- _____ 9. See that each special committee understands its work, and is functioning. _____
- _____ 10. Have a brief summary of annual report printed. _____
- _____ 11. Prepare annual meeting notice for mailing to members and press. Address envelopes. _____
- _____ 12. Complete guest list. Plan to recognize key officials, old members, new members and friends. _____
- _____ 13. Invite local Vo-Ag classes, 4-H clubs and other youth groups to the annual meeting. _____

- _____ 14. Line up public address system, projectors, _____
and other equipment.
- _____ 15. _____

NOTE.—The above checklist, with its provision for additional jobs, is intended primarily as a guide. Each cooperative may wish to prepare its own list, including only those items that are applicable.

Things To Do ----- **(Three weeks before)**
(Date)

- _____ 16. Notify members of annual meeting in ac- _____
cordance with bylaws.
- _____ 17. Send news item to local papers and radio _____
stations, giving program highlights. Put
advertisement in papers.
- _____ 18. Prepare charts showing growth in volume, _____
refunds, etc.
- _____ 19. Arrange for co-op banners and signs. _____
- _____ 20. Plan merchandise and educational dis- _____
plays.
- _____ 21. Order programs and literature needed. _____
- _____ 22. _____

Things To Do ----- **(Two weeks before)**
(Date)

- _____ 23. Check arrangements for food—estimate _____
probable number.
- _____ 24. Post notices with date, place, and time for _____
meeting.
- _____ 25. Mail letters to special guests, including the _____
press.
- _____ 26. Send additonal news to local papers and _____
radio stations. Include background of
speaker, etc.
- _____ 27. Check with secretary on minutes of last an- _____
nual meeting and roll call.
- _____ 28. Have reminder notices printed and ad- _____
dressed.
- _____ 29. _____

Things To Do ----- **(One Week Before)**
(Date)

- _____ 30. Mail reminder notices to all members. _____
- _____ 31. Check with committees to make sure that _____
nothing has been overlooked.
- _____ 32. Prepare meeting agenda CAREFULLY. _____

- _____ 33. Notify speakers and entertainers when each is to appear on the program, and for how long. _____
- _____ 34. Notify reception committee to be on hand early. Make sure they are instructed to seat latecomers properly. _____
- _____ 35. Arrange for reporters and photographers. _____
- _____ 36. _____

Things To Do ----- **(Day before meeting)**
(Date)

- _____ 37. Check meeting place for heat, light, ventilation, chairs, tables, registration facilities, ballots, pencils, chalk, blackboard, electric outlets, etc. _____
- _____ 38. Put up co-op banners and posters. Create the "co-op meeting" atmosphere. _____
- _____ 39. Erect merchandise and educational displays. _____
- _____ 40. Remind local editor that he is invited. _____
- _____ 41. Check with protographer regarding pictures desired. _____
- _____ 42. _____

Things To Do ----- **(Day of meeting)**
(Date)

- _____ 43. Check the auditorium for temperature, ventilation, and general physical comfort. Know where to find extra chairs if needed. _____
- _____ 44. Give final instructions to reception and registration committees. Assign places to ushers. _____
- _____ 45. Check to see that meal arrangements have been completed. _____
- _____ 46. Supervise those to whom responsibilities have been delegated. _____
- _____ 47. Strive to begin on time, stay on time, close on time. _____
- _____ 48. _____

Things To Do ----- **(Day after)**
(Date)

- _____ 49. Clean up premises and return borrowed equipment. _____
- _____ 50. Make report to local newspapers and to co-op's editor. _____
- _____ 51. Send roundup report to all members giving the annual meeting highlights. _____

- _____ 52. Send thank-you letter to key individuals _____
who participated.
- _____ 53. Invite members and employees to appraise _____
meeting and to suggest improvements.
- _____ 54. _____

Examples of Annual Meeting Notices

This annual meeting notice, mailable on a postal card, has the advantage of brevity:

FARMVILLE, VA., *April 1, 19—.*

DEAR FELLOW MEMBER:

The annual meeting of the Farmville Farmers Exchange, will be held Saturday, April 10, 9:30 a. m. sharp at the Farmville High School. You are urged to attend.

Cooperatively yours,

GENERAL MANAGER.

But this one is much more likely to create interest and help bring out the crowd:

January 16—Mark It on Your Calendar!

That's the date for the annual meeting of the Simpson County Farmer Cooperative—and we know you'll want to attend! The meeting will be held in the Community Hall and will start promptly at 9:30 a. m.

An exceptionally fine program has been arranged—plenty of entertainment, worth-while speeches, and interesting reports. Music by the "Old Grey Mare Band."

A copy of the printed "timetable" of the various events is enclosed. You will note that Dean Jones from the State College will be with us again. The Dean's talks are always good. His subject this year is "How to Build a Better Co-op." You owe it to yourself to hear him.

The Auditor's report will be streamlined and modernized through the use of charts, maps, and diagrams. Your association has just completed one of the most successful seasons in its history. Mr. Brown will tell you where the money came from and how it was distributed.

These are only two of the many interesting features. There will be plenty of time for discussing the association's problems. Come prepared to take part. Now is the time to bring up those questions that you have had in mind concerning the association and its operations.

* * *

P. S.—Don't forget the date. January 16, Community Hall at Simpson, 9:30 a. m. We'll be looking for you.

Example of Detailed Program for Use of Chairman

10:00 a. m. Call the meeting to order promptly.

1. Ask everybody to stand and join in singing "The Star-Spangled Banner."
2. Invocation.
3. Welcome members.
 - (a) Ask those who are attending their first annual meeting to raise their hands high, their second, their third, their fourth, their fifth, and those attending their sixth to stand. Give them a nice handclap of recognition.
 - (b) Express pleasure to see so many visitors, such as the county agent, home demonstration agent, and teachers of vocational agriculture. Indicate our appreciation of their interest in our association and their cooperation with us.
4. State purposes of the meeting.
 - (a) To report to members on the general and financial affairs of their association.
 - (b) To elect two directors for 3 years to fill the two expiring terms.
 - (c) To give members an opportunity to express their views regarding the association and make suggestions for improvement.
 - (d) To give the members an opportunity to become better acquainted with the directors, officers, employees, and each other.
5. Mention briefly the program for the day.
 - (a) The main features of the morning program. (1) Address by Dean Jones; (2) Report of Board of Directors; (3) One-Act Skit by 4-H Club Members.
 - (b) Time and place of lunch (12:00 in basement of this building).
 - (c) Main features of afternoon program. (1) Annual Business Report; (2) Committee Reports; (3) Election of Directors.
 - (d) Time of adjournment (promptly at 4:30 p. m.).
6. Appoint Miss Harris to take minutes of the meeting.
7. Have the secretary read official notice of the meeting. Order the notice and affidavits filed with the minutes of the meeting.
8. Have the secretary read the minutes of the last meeting.
 - (a) Ask if there are any corrections or additions. If none, state that the minutes will stand approved as read.

10:30 a. m. Introduce Dean Jones:

Dean of State Agricultural College—keenly interested in co-operatives—relationship between college and this association—work done at college.

After address call on Miss Smith for vocal solo.

Express our appreciation for her kindness in appearing on the program.

11:00 a. m. Present the Board of Directors' report, using the outline previously prepared.

1. Ask the other members of the board of directors whether they would like to add anything to the report.

2. Call on the members for questions concerning the report.

11:30 a. m. Announce 4-H Club Skit.

12:00. Make announcements regarding luncheon and the afternoon program.

1. Lunch will be served immediately in the basement of this building. The ushers at the rear of the room will direct you to the basement.

2. After lunch we shall reconvene in this room and start the afternoon session promptly at 1:15 p. m.

The afternoon session will be the business session. It is important that as many of the members as possible be present.

AFTERNOON PROGRAM

1:15 p. m. Call the meeting to order.

Announce that the meeting will be adjourned promptly at 4:30 p. m. and urge the members to remain until that time.

Call on the manager to present the Annual Business Report. Just before the manager starts his report announce that a panel of four members have been selected to ask questions after the presentation of his report, and the financial report which is to follow.

- (a) Ask the panel members selected to please come forward and occupy the chairs provided here in front.

- (b) Introduce the members of the panel—C. R. Worth, B. K. White, G. W. Green, and Bill Barnes.

- (c) Mention that panel members were given copies of the two reports in advance of the meeting so that they would be prepared to ask questions that would interest those attending the meeting.

1:45 p. m. Call for financial report by Mr. Blank, Treasurer.

2:15 p. m. Call for the panel questions.

1. When panel members finish asking questions on the report, ask audience if they have any other questions they would like to ask before we proceed to the next order of business.

2. When discussion of questions asked is completed, call for a motion to accept the reports as presented.

3. Order report filed with minutes of meeting.

2:45 p. m. Announce that the next 45 minutes will be given over to committee reports.

1. Call on Mr. Ortiz to report for the committee that was appointed to study the advisability of building a new warehouse.
 - (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.
2. Call on Mr. Laws to report for the committee on "Dividend Policy."
 - (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.
3. Call on Mr. Abbot to report for the membership committee.
 - (a) Ask what action the members wish to take on this report.
4. Ask whether there is any other unfinished business to come before the meeting.

3:30 p. m. State that we are now ready to elect two directors for a 3-year term.

1. Explain the importance of the election.
 - (a) It is the members' opportunity to exercise control over their association by electing the men they feel are best qualified to represent them.
 - (b) Every member has only one vote regardless of the amount of stock he owns so every member is on an equal voting basis.
 - (c) We want this to be a very democratic election with everyone taking part and asking any questions they care to.
2. Indicate that the two directors whose terms expire are A. M. Johnston and C. J. Casto.
3. Indicate how the nominating committee of three members was selected. The members of this committee are Howard Franklin, James Hall, and John Johnston.
 - (a) Mention that nominating committee was instructed to inform the members of the qualifications they considered a director should have and the basis on which they selected their nominees.
4. Call on Mr. Franklin, chairman of the nominating committee, to make the report of that committee.
5. Call for any nominations from the floor. Allow ample time and encourage such nominations.
 - (a) The name and address of anyone nominated from the floor should be written on the blackboard and the person making the nomination asked to say a few words about experience and qualifications of the man he nominated.
 - (b) After all nominations from the floor have been made or if there are no nominations from the floor, state that a motion is in order for the nominations to be closed.
6. Ask all those nominated to please come to the front so they may be introduced.
7. Remind the members that they are to vote for only two of the candidates nominated.

8. Ask the ushers to collect and count the ballots.

Announce that the "surprise" listed on the program will be a 5-minute concert by "Smoky" Smoot and his one-man band. Call on "Smoky" to begin the concert.

Announce the results of the election. Express to the retiring directors the appreciation of the association for their services.

- 4:15 p. m. Ask whether there is any other business to come before the meeting.

1. Get each proposal in the form of a motion. Ask for a second. Give time for discussion. After each vote announce whether the motion carried or failed.
2. Express appreciation for the interest members have taken in the meeting and the pleasure of having so many of them attend.
3. Ask members to give us any suggestions they have regarding this meeting and ways to improve next year's meeting.
4. Ask members to join in popular patriotic song.

- 4:30 p. m. Call for a motion to adjourn.

Other Publications Available

- Farmer Cooperatives in the United States, Bulletin 1, *FCS Staff*.
Sizing Up Your Cooperative, FCS Educational Circular 11.
The Story of Farmer Cooperatives, FCS Educational Circular 1.
Three Principles of Agricultural Cooperation, Circular E-24, *Ward W. Fetrow*.
Cooperative Business Training for Farm Youth, FCS Circular 1, *Oscar R. LeBeau* and *John H. Heckman*.
How Women Help Their Farmer Co-ops, FCS Circular 15, *Oscar R. LeBeau* and *John H. Heckman*.
Formulas for Annual Meetings, News for Farmer Cooperatives, July 1953.
Ideas for Making Annual Meetings Effective, Reprint 9, from News for Farmer Cooperatives.
Farmer Cooperatives in Our Community, Circular E-32, *A. W. McKay*.
Members' Knowledge and Attitudes—Calavo Growers of California, Circular C-137, *A. W. McKay*.
Motion Picture Films Available on Cooperation, Information 2.
Organizing a Farmer Cooperative, FCS Circular 18.
Patrons Appraise Cooperative Relations, Circular C-140, *Oscar R. LeBeau* and *John H. Heckman*.
Selecting and Electing Directors of Farmers' Cooperatives, General Report 14, *Nelda Griffin*, *H. N. Weigandt*, and *K. B. Gardner*.

A copy of each of these publications may be obtained by writing

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